

REMARKS

Claims 18-29 and 31 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 18-29 are amended, claims 16 and 30 are canceled, and claim 31 is added. Support for the amendments may be found, for example, in the original claims and throughout the specification. No new matter is added.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (as the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution); (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claim 30 contains allowable subject matter. By this Amendment, the subject matter of claim 30 is presented as new independent claim 31, and claim 30 is canceled. Accordingly, allowance of claim 31 is respectfully requested.

I. Claim Objections

As confirmed during a telephone conference on October 17, 2008 with Examiner Lamb, the Advisory Action objects to claim 30 for being dependent on a rejected claim. By this Amendment, claim 30 is canceled, rendering its objection moot and the subject matter of

allowable claim 30 is inserted into new independent claim 31. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112, First Paragraph

Given the silence of the Advisory Action and the indication that claim 30 contains allowable subject matter, Applicants believe that the rejection of claims 16-30 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement, is withdrawn.

III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

Given the silence of the Advisory Action and the indication that claim 30 contains allowable subject matter, Applicants believe that the rejection of claims 16-30 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite, is withdrawn.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

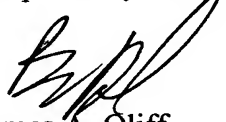
The Office Action rejects claims 16-30 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,749,970 to Fukuta et al. (hereinafter "Fukuta"). The Advisory Action notes that the rejection of claims 16 and 18-29 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,749,970 to Fukata is maintained. By this Amendment, claim 16 is canceled, rendering its rejection moot. Additionally, by this Amendment, 18-29 are amended to depend from new claim 31 and, thus, are allowable for the reasons discussed above. Accordingly, the rejection is overcome. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:BSP/jfb

Attachment:
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: October 27, 2008

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